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Funding social change since 1967

RESIST

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A Call to Resist Illegitimate Authority

February, 1994

Impatience and Isolation in Haiti: New England Delegation Reports

The New England Observers' Delegation to Haiti was formed to support the Haitian people's struggle for democracy. It was organized in response to a request from the Boston Consulate of the Republic of Haiti, with the purpose of monitoring the restoration of democracy, and accompanying President Jean-Bertrand Aristide on his expected return to Haiti on October 30th, 1993.

When the United Nations agreement was broken by the illegal military regime in Haiti, the Delegation met with Aristide, who asked them to visit Haiti from October 28th to November 2, 1993 and provide a voice for democracy at places Aristide himself would have visited. Eighteen Delegation members made the trip, and a second New England team returned to Haiti December 14th – 19th, to commemorate December 16th, the third anniversary of Aristide's election, and to protest the increasingly brutal repression of the Haitian people, especially the non-violent Lavalas movement.

This article is edited from several reports and statements the two teams released upon their return to Boston. For more complete and updated information, please contact the Haiti Com-



Demonstration by the Haitian peasants organization, Mouvement Peyizan Papay, during the period when Aristide was in power in Haiti. Such demonstrations are now impossible, but MPP is still organizing underground. Photo: Cathy MacAffee.

munications Project (617) 542-1013; the Mouvement Peyizan Papay (MPP-EDF) at (617) 542-1140; or Roxbury Community College, Caribbean Focus at (617) 541-5314. Actions you can take are described at the end of the article.

In the December 16th, 1990 elections in Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide won by a landslide with 67 percent of the vote. Finally the Haitian people,

especially the poor majority, had someone in power who truly represented them. The U.S. administration, under President Bush, which had promised economic aid following the election, had supported another candidate—Marc Bazin. Although Bush had to recognize President Aristide (who had won with a larger majority than any other president in the Western Hemisphere), the U.S. showed its displeasure by not

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providing the promised aid. On September 30th, 1991, Aristide was overthrown in a bloody coup engineered by opposition in the Haitian armed forces. The army and police (which are under the same command in Haiti) quickly armed thousands of civilian "attaches," and began hunting down anybody who openly supported democracy.

Under a UN fuel and arms embargo, and under political pressure from the U.S., the coup leaders finally agreed to negotiate with Aristide. The Governor's Island Accord, signed in early July 1993, spells out the resignation of Army Commander Raoul Cedras and Police Chief Michel Francois, and the return of President Aristide. Aristide's government made major concessions, and promised amnesty to the coup leaders.

The military soon showed that they had no intention of complying with the Accord. A "riot" of military-organized *attaches* prevented the landing of the UN technical advisors who came to reorganize the police force in late September. Threats against the Haitian parliament prevented them from meeting to take the necessary actions. Finally, Cedras and Francois failed to resign, making it impossible for Aristide to return on October 30th. This was the situation at the time the first New England Delegation team traveled to Haiti.

Formation of the Delegation

In response to the request from Aristide's government, the New England Delegation was formed by Ehrl LaFontant of the Haiti Communications Project, and Dr. Tom Reeves of Roxbury Community College. The Delegation is co-chaired by Bazelaïs Jean-Baptiste of the Mouvement Peyizan Papay (a Haitian peasant organization) and Prof. Dessima Williams, a sociologist at Brandeis University and former Ambassador to the UN from Granada. The Delegation includes public officials, educators, lawyers, and community activists from the Boston area. A list of the entire membership of the Delegation and of the two teams that traveled to Haiti is available. (Call the numbers listed above).

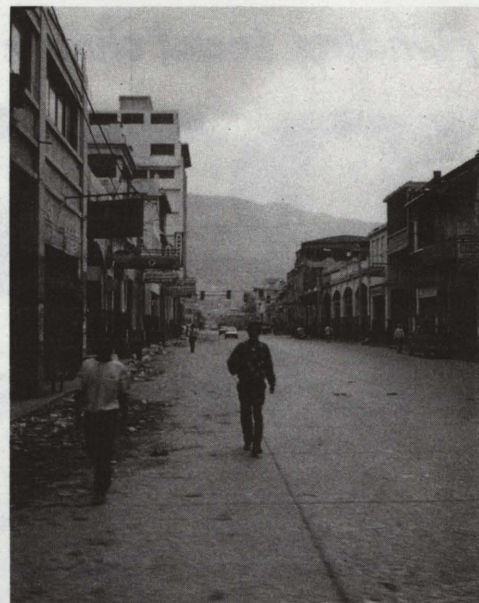
The two teams went to Haiti with plans to visit Aristide's ministers, hold meetings with UN and U.S. officials, meet with representatives of popular organizations to hear their concerns, and deliver medicines from Grassroots International and the Boston Committee for Heath Rights in Central America, as well as medical supplies from Professional Equipment for the Needy, for distribution at health centers in Haiti. The second team also went to the National Penitentiary in Port-au-Prince to investigate the condition of political prisoners there.

Overview of Conditions in Haiti

After spending six days in Haiti, the first team was stunned by the political reign of terror existing there, and the collapse of public institutions. Political repression and corruption by the military, the police, and their allies have deepened an already devastating poverty. Haiti is a country held hostage by heavily armed mobsters directed by the military.

Yet what was most impressive to members of the team was the ability of Haitians to live in dignity—and in many cases to actively resist—in the face of economic and political conditions that are grim beyond description. Ordinary Haitians remained resolute and committed to democracy. A Delegation member witnessed an unannounced pro-Aristide demonstration of 200 people in an urban slum. Peasant and urban groups, though now underground, continue to organize and carry out small-scale economic development projects. It is because of this resistance that after two years the coup d'état remains unable to consolidate its power. It is because of this resistance that Jean-Bertrand Aristide is still considered President of Haiti.

The United States, however, continues to send mixed signals on Haiti. While President Clinton and U.S. Ambassador Swing publically express their support for democracy in Haiti, elements of the CIA and other branches of the U.S. government work to undermine Aristide. The delegation is also aware that conservative U.S. organiza-



Conditions in Haitian cities and slums are bleak ... but people continue to live with dignity.
Photo: Paul Shannon.

tions, such as the Heritage Foundation and Oliver North's National Freedom Institute, are working to prop up the military rulers. The delegation was told

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ILLEGITIMATE AUTHORITY

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For information and grant guidelines write to:
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Jackie Shearer — Mentor and Friend, Documentarian and People's Advocate

JANET AXELROD and
DICKIE CLUSTER

Jacqueline Shearer, a longtime pledge and supporter of RESIST, died of colon cancer in November, 1993. Jackie was well known to many of RESIST's staff and board members because of her work as a civil rights documentarian, as an advocate for former prisoners, as a strong voice of support for independent artists, and as a mentor to women and people of color in the world of film and video making. The following piece is a slightly shortened version of a tribute to Jackie written by her friends Janet Axelrod and Dickie Cluster, and given out at her memorial service held at the African Meeting House in early December. At the time of her death, Jackie had been working for more than a decade on "Addie and the Pink Carnations," a feature film about the first union of Black women domestic workers in the 1930s. A fund is being established in Jackie's name to help support the work of African American women filmmakers. Contributions should be made out to The Funding Exchange/Jackie Shearer Fund, and mailed to: The Funding Exchange, 666 Broadway, New York, NY 10023. The staff and board of RESIST extend our condolences to all of Jackie's friends and family.

Someone who met Jackie only after her cancer was already quite advanced asked, "Was she always that elegant? Did she always carry herself that way?" She was more than just elegant, and the dignity of her personal bearing reflected a deeply rooted integrity and commitment to principle. "Principle" is in fact a word that comes to mind many times over in looking back on Jackie's life, because she really did put principles first in whatever she did. Because of her dedication to service, to making change, and to making

things plain, she frequently did more than her share without complaint, rising above those situations where she had been unfairly treated.

She was intensely loyal to her friends, able to speak with a rare honesty and directness, yet most often gently and never destructively. She went through life with consistent style and dignity, whether in her dress or her speech or her politics. She loved travel, and she loved holing up in her apartment too. She would fight tenaciously on issues of principle, especially political principle, and she would find a dry, inventive humor in the most unexpected things.

And she was an intellectual treasure. Widely read, from the *Star* to the *New Yorker* in periodicals, with equally broad range in fiction and non-fiction, she had a voracious appetite for art and culture. She always had an opinion, but it was unwise to predict what it would be, since her positions were not rote or predictable, but freshly thought and felt out. She had a scholar's approach; she wanted to learn about everything that concerned those close to her, and she

wound up being knowledgeable about an awful lot of things that had little to do with her immediate life, from raising children to the Latin names for plants.

Jackie's inner life reflected her deliberateness about what work she chose to do. She possessed a great sense of mission regarding making change through media. She believed that through the decisions she made about the use of her craft, she could help open people's eyes to political realities as she saw or experienced them. As in everything she did, Jackie brought tremendous integrity to her work, in film or outside of it. When she was the recipient of a grant to make a film, she considered the quality of the product more important than the budgeting. She always paid her staff first and herself last. She did what had to be done in order to be proud of the end result of her work, and she was.

Many who knew Jackie met her through her work, but most of us know only part of it. Jackie Shearer brought us much more than the projects she designed and the products she pro-

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Jackie Shearer in 1982. Photo: Janet Axelrod.

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duced, but in her work she always brought to bear a combination of high standards, humor, analysis, commitment, and stubborn personal vision—the same combination that her friends and family saw and loved in the rest of her life.

Eyes on African American history

Jackie was born November 30th, 1946, and grew up in Columbia Point, Dorchester. She went to Boston public schools, and graduated from Girls Latin School in 1964. Then she lived and studied at Brandeis University, graduating in 1968 with a degree in history. Summers, she worked in local tutoring programs and for the NAACP. In the summer of 1966, she worked for the federal Head Start program in Mississippi, encouraging Black parents to demand inclusion in the classes from which local officials were excluding them.

Jackie's first job out of college was designing a U.S. history curriculum, focusing on African Americans, for the Education Development Center. Somewhat by accident, she found herself at the founding meeting of Boston Newsreel, a film production and screening group that saw and used media as a tool for social change. In Newsreel, she began learning—and teaching herself—how to make films.

In the fall of 1969, Jackie got a job at Urban Planning Aid, a nonprofit agency providing technical support to community organizations. Here too she used mass media to contribute to the growth of a radical movement. Over the next three years she made slide shows and videos about tenants' rights and tenants' unions, trained community activists in the use of video equipment and public access cable TV, and organized conferences about alternative community-based media, both visual and print. Working with the tenant self-management group at the Bromley Heath housing project in Jamaica Plain [Boston], she directed her first dramatic video.

She soon began to produce a weekly African American public affairs show

for WBCN radio. In 1974, she became an associate producer of the show *Third World* and other public affairs programs on WCVB-TV, Channel 5. During this time she also worked with a group that prepared public service announcements for organizing efforts, including an early announcement about the Nestle's infant formula boycott campaign.

When the intransigence of the Boston School Committee toward Black parents' demands for quality education finally exploded into the school busing crisis of the mid-1970s, Jackie looked for a way to respond in film. With Terry Signaigo and Mary Tiseo she formed Walnut Films and plunged into fundraising and research for the film she eventually directed, *A Minor Altercation*. [The film] dramatized the aftermath of a school fight between two girls—one Black and one white—to explore issues of racism, class, gender, and school bureaucracy.

Developing her craft

After *A Minor Altercation*, Jackie began to explore ideas for full length feature films about African Americans, forming Reel Deal Production Co. as the vehicle for this work. At the same time, she made a living and developed her craft producing educational shorts, training films, and public service announcements for Blackside, Inc.; she did publicity work for OVER, a Black community voter registration campaign in Boston; and she did publicity for the Amandla concert, featuring Bob Marley and the Wailers, Patti Labelle, and others, to benefit Southern Africa liberation movements.

In 1976, working with her friend Lyn Levy, Jackie became the founding chairperson of the board of directors of Span, Inc., the only independent nonprofit program for prisoners and ex-prisoners in Massachusetts. She continued in this post until her death. In 1980, she began researching the history of organizing efforts by African American domestic workers with an eye toward producing a historically-based feature film.

The domestic workers' project

became a series of film treatments and scripts, eventually under the title *Addie and the Pink Carnations*, set in 1930s Harlem. [Despite on-going efforts, she] was unable to get the funding she needed to begin making the film. In her persistent work on this project, through many scripts, Jackie tried both to portray a central piece of African American women's history, and to explore aspects of her own life and motivations.

Jackie continued her work on documentaries and training films, and became increasingly active in promoting independent film and video and in helping young filmmakers, particularly African American women, to get their visions onto the screen. She organized a fundraising event for the Film Fund honoring Harry Belafonte, produced a videotape marking the 25th anniversary of the Center for Constitutional Rights, and directed *Incident Report*, a dramatic training film exploring the issue of nursing home patient abuse. Her service on funding application review panels included those of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Back to Boston

In 1988, Jackie returned to Boston [from New York, where she had lived since 1981] and to Blackside, Inc., to co-produce two segments of the second series of *Eyes on the Prize*, broadcast in 1989. The first, *The Promised Land*, covered the year 1968 with a particular focus on the increasingly radical vision of Martin Luther King. The second, *The Keys to the Kingdom*, dealt with attempts to institutionalize desegregation and Black political power (or to roll it back): Boston school desegregation; Maynard Jackson's administration as mayor of Atlanta; and the Bakke case.

Two years later, working out of both New York and Boston, she produced *The Massachusetts 54th Colored Infantry*. This film premiered at the Tremont Temple in Boston, site of Frederick Douglass's address on the Emancipation Proclamation, and was broadcast on PBS in 1991. *The Mas-*

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by residents of Haiti that in the week leading up to October 30th, the Voice of America daily broadcast interviews with a spokesperson of the Heritage Foundation who assassinated Aristide's character.

The Delegation met with Prime Minister Robert Malval, Minister of Information Herve Denis, representatives of a dozen Haitian community and peasant organizations, Catholic clergy, intellectuals, people in the countryside, urban bus-drivers, UN Envoy Dante Caputo, U.S. Ambassador William Swing, journalists, and representatives of the U.S. Immigration Service, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Agency for International Development.

The first team organized a press conference and prayer vigil with a National Lawyers Guild delegation at the church of Sacre Coeur on October 30th, and a second press conference on November 2nd. Sacre Coeur was chosen as the site of the October 30th action because that is where Aristide supporter and businessman, Antoine Izmary, was dragged from the church, shot, and left in the street for several hours to bleed to death.

It turned out that this was the only

editorial statements critical of the coup, but is able to quote others making such statements. Therefore the Delegation held another press conference, aimed at the media. Their statement, read in Creole and English, was aired in its entirety on Haitian radio that night. It strongly condemned the Haitian military and the *attaches*.

Economic Conditions and Repression Deplorable

The Delegation saw city-dwellers living in shacks surrounded by heaps of garbage and channels of raw sewage in the giant slums of LaSaline and Cite Soleil. This poverty is made all the more stark by the easily visible contrast with the material wealth of the elite — BMWs, Mercedes Benzes, expensive vans, and extensive villas, many new and some under construction, on the hills rising above the slums.

Haitian and foreign observers stated that since the coup d'etat, repression was the most intense they had ever seen. According to one observer (a priest), the quantity and quality of firearms in the hands of right wing "civilians" is unprecedented. Some people estimate that the military has armed as many of 50,000 "civilians" in Port-au-Prince, and

people have been killed since the coup began. In the countryside, where guns are less widespread, a common practice is to beat someone, handcuff them, and throw them in the river to drown. Typically, a group of 50 armed men comes to beat and/or kill one targeted person.

But killings are just the tip of the iceberg. Beatings, rapes, and imprisonment are also common in many areas.

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Tribute

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sachusetts 54th emphasized the role of Boston's free Black abolitionist community in the forming of the first African American Civil War regiment. It showcased the role of Black combatants in making the abolition of slavery one of the North's key goals in the war.

After *The 54th*, Jackie returned to the history of the civil rights movement, creating a multi-screen video installation and a documentary videotape for the Birmingham (Alabama) Civil Rights Museum. In 1992 she was elected president and chair of the Independent Television Service. She continued to lecture extensively on film-making, history, and her own career at film centers and universities.

Jackie had been in pain all through the fall of 1992, and in March of 1993 she was diagnosed with colon cancer which had spread to other organs. She stayed in her apartment in Brooklyn until late May, when it became clear to her that she needed more care, which her Boston friends and family could provide at that time. She began receiving chemotherapy treatments in June. She endured much psychic and physical pain in the last months of her life. Nothing was harder for her than the gradual but inexorable shrinking of her independent life, yet at the same time she found ways to accept help from those who loved her, more than she had ever done before. To the very end, she brought her considerable strength of will and body, her stubborn refusal to give in, to this final struggle against cancer. She died at home in Cambridge, surrounded by friends and family, early on the morning of November 26th. ◇

*...the day after our action at the Church of Sacre Coeur,
a body was dumped on the spot where we had placed flowers
in commemoration of Antoine Izmary.*

—Paul Shannon—

Konbit: the Haitian American Solidarity Alliance, and member
of the first New England Delegation team

pro-democracy demonstration in Port-au-Prince on the day Aristide was to have returned. A terrorized population was forced to remain behind closed doors. The Delegation achieved the international visibility through the press that Aristide had requested. The group laid flowers at the site where Izmary died; the next day the Delegation learned that a dead body had been dumped on top of the flowers as a grim response from the military.

The Haitian media is constrained by the threat of violence from making

300,000 nationwide. In many cases, serving as an *attache* or *Macoute* does not reflect political opposition to Aristide; it's just an opportunity for a paycheck and a small taste of power.

Repression is targeted at known or suspected pro-democracy activists, their families, and their communities. But because pro-democracy views are so universal, virtually any poor person can be a target. Observers estimate that about 10 people a night are killed or "disappeared" by the military and the right wing, and that 3,000 to 10,000

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Police officials often jail people and demand payment to release them. Military and right wing forces have also confiscated or destroyed people's land, animals, and property. The Delegation spoke to the mayor of one town who fled after his house was raided. Thousands in the countryside have left their homes, in many cases fleeing to Port-au-Prince or to the Dominican Republic.

The violence has created a pervasive attitude of fear. The first team heard shooting through the night each night they were there in a middle class neighborhood far from downtown Port-au-Prince. People avoid travelling after dark. Legal organizations have gone underground, since visible leaders have been killed, beaten, or jailed. Though many Haitians spoke out in favor of democracy and President Aristide, they did so only in private.

Effects of the Embargo

The fuel embargo is clearly having an impact: gasoline prices soared while the first team was in Haiti. While this has had an effect on the poor, the media may have exaggerated this effect. The large majority of Haitians are peasants who use little or no fuel in any case. Most importantly, even pro-democracy organizations who have seen their constituencies hurt by the limited embargo still support a full commercial embargo. They believe the short-term pain is a necessary step to solving the much larger long-term problems of poverty and exploitation.

[The second team, on its return, issued a statement declaring the embargo, as currently carried out, to be a fake. "It has not hampered the ostentatious lifestyle of the elite, but has increased the severe misery of the poor. The oppressors receive a constant supply of goods through the Dominican Republic or by air, using the embargo as tool for further aggression. This is evidenced, for instance, by documented theft and inflated sale of humanitarian supplies by the corrupt military and their supporters." As this issue went to press, members of the New England

Delegation said they support a strengthened embargo.]

The political and economic problems of Haiti are closely linked. Peasant organizers spoke of "political and economic repression" in a single breath, pointing out that those members of the elite who are lending to peasants at usurious rates are the same ones coordinating the violence. Many view the running down of the infrastructure as a

ings and rape, documenting repression. Second, they are carrying out small scale development projects — for example, credit programs to help women start businesses. Third, they are rebuilding communication networks. And fourth, they are trying to work together in broader coalitions for the restoration of democracy.

These organizations do sometimes undertake public actions, such as sit-

◆
*The ability of the right wing to assert its authority
has been devastating. Local organizing has been forced
underground, members have been killed and terrorized....
Our North American privilege enables us to be in Haiti and speak
out publically for those who temporarily cannot do so.*

—Cathy Hoffman—

chair of the Cambridge Peace Commission, and member
of the first New England Delegation team

political weapon, designed to wear down people's support for Aristide and democracy.

Grassroots Organizations Continue to Work

The first delegation team spoke to representatives of eleven grassroots pro-democracy organizations representing peasants and agricultural workers from various parts of the country, as well as city-dwellers, youth, and Catholic clergy. The most important fact is that these groups still exist. "They think that they destroyed the MPP," a leader of Mouvement Peyizan Paypay told the Delegation. "But they didn't destroy the MPP. They destroyed some people and some projects of the MPP, but they did not destroy the idea." However, repression has driven these groups underground. Many leaders have been killed, imprisoned, or driven from their homes. Large-scale development projects have been broken up. The groups have been forced to work in new ways, meeting secretly or in small groups.

The organizations are pursuing four main forms of work. First, they are attempting to deal with the repression: assisting families who have been forced to flee, securing care for victims of beat-

ings, but at present such actions are risky and rare. [It is much safer for foreigners to hold public actions, which is one of the reasons the New England Delegation was formed.] Ongoing resistance has prevented the coup d'etat from consolidating, and has kept the hope of democracy alive, but so far it has not been sufficient to bring down the coup. Representatives of these organizations believe that the *combination* of negotiation and resistance is needed to restore democracy. They would like to see more coordination between those working on negotiations and resistance, including a larger role for Haiti's grassroots groups in the negotiation process.

Second Team Returns

The second team attempted to investigate the condition of political prisoners. Meeting a hostile reaction from prison guards, who shoved and threatened them, delegation members read a statement in both Creole and English, denouncing flagrant human rights abuses in Haiti. They marched in front of the prison on a crowded street, singing in solidarity with the prisoners inside. The demonstration was reported by courageous Haitian journalists and carried on Haitian radio and television.

The group then met with U.S. Ambassador William Swing and other embassy officials, demanding that the U.S. end the complicity with the illegitimate regime and demonstrate genuine support for President Aristide with actions as well as words. While Ambassador Swing denied reports of a change in policy toward Aristide, and reiterated the full support of the U.S. government for democracy, it is clear to the Delegation that U.S. actions still bolster the growing aggression of the military.

The team wrote: "We remain convinced of two basic truths—The coup will crumble as soon as the U.S. government and its confederates withdraw all aid to the repression, and instead allow real and substantial international support for the government of President Aristide. The Haitian people and their democratic, grassroots leaders remain unflinchingly supportive of democracy, and are growing in their unified determination to drive out tyranny and begin again to build a just society. As lovers of freedom, from one imperfect cradle of democracy, New England, we stand in solidarity with their valiant struggle." LAVALAS! [Lavalas means "flood," referring to a cleansing flood of democracy to eliminate corruption and oppression.]

What You Can Do

The grassroots groups that the New England Delegation met with asked for several things from the international community. These include the imposition of a full commercial embargo on Haiti, which they believe will be effective in removing the coup leadership from power; the return of the UN/OAS human rights monitors, who, while in Haiti, had been able to save lives, especially in the countryside where the most brutal violence is taking place; and no foreign military intervention — the groups believe that foreign soldiers will not help solve the problems in Haiti. Power must be shifted away from the military and into the hands of ordinary people.

Therefore, people in the U.S. should contact President Clinton, their senators, and congressional representa-



New England Delegation members meeting with President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, October 23, 1993.
Photo: Jeffree Luke.

tives, and demand: 1) an end to the character assassination of President Aristide, an end to hints that Aristide must reshuffle his Cabinet, an end to Pentagon and CIA support of the military in Haiti, and an end to forced repatriation of Haitian refugees; 2) defense of the Governor's Island Accord, rather than asking additional concessions from President Aristide; 3) a full commercial embargo, as requested by the Aristide government, excluding humanitarian aid; 4) and no military intervention in Haiti.

In addition, the New England Delegation encourages more observer delegations to go to Haiti, because of the critical importance of international witnesses. Especially important are groups that can stay for long periods of time. The main group organizing observer delegations is *Cry for Justice*, c/o Pax Christi USA, 348 East 10th St., Erie, PA, 16503. Tel: (814) 453-4955.

Finally, there are a number of groups in the U.S. providing financial assistance to grassroots pro-democracy groups in Haiti. These include the Haiti Communications Project, The Mouvaman Peyizan Papay, Grassroots International, Oxfam-America, and the Resistans Demokratik Ayityen (RDA – Haitian Democratic Resistance). Addresses for donations and for more

information appear below. ◇

To learn more about directly supporting resistance groups in Haiti, contact the Honorable Jean Geneus, Consulate of Haiti, in Boston at (617) 266-3660.

*Haiti Communications Project
25 West Street
Boston, MA 02111
(617) 542-1013
fax: 617 542-1017*

*Grassroots International
48 Grove Street, #103
Somerville, MA 02144
(617) 628-1664
fax: 617 628-4737*

*Oxfam America
26 West Street
Boston, MA 02111
(617) 482-1211
fax: 617 728-2594*

*RDA
c/o Philippe Geneus and Myrtha Dupoux
P.O. Box 769
Dorchester, MA 02124.*

Violence in Our Society

FABIAN VOGES

Sometimes the violence just seems out of control. Kids with guns. Women killed by their so-called "lovers." Neo-Nazis stoning recent immigrants in Germany. Serial child murderers. The forced return of fleeing Haitian refugees to their "burning house." And, of course, whole regions of the world living on bloody killing fields in wars over national identity and race. As Fabian Voges writes in this essay, "it is important to do something" in response. In this issue of the newsletter our grants section (see page 10) highlights RESIST grantees engaged in peacemaking. One of these groups, the Cape Cod Chapter of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, sponsors the annual Clarence M. Althouse Peace Essay Competition at a local high school. This essay was awarded 1st Prize among essays submitted by 11th and 12th grade students from Nauset Regional High School. The author refers primarily to his experiences growing up in Hamburg, Germany.

Before I start writing about violence, I want you to know that I am totally against violence but you'll figure that out on your own if you read the essay.

I'm from Germany and I lived there all my life (seventeen years) so I'll write more about violence in Germany compared to America or/and I'll use Germany as an example. I haven't had confrontations with violence here in America.

Violence is wrong. There are always better ways to solve a problem, discuss it and you'll find a solution. And the people should think more before they act. I believe everyone has felt like hitting someone, beating him/her up. Some people did. I didn't. I thought about it and realized that it wouldn't help anyone when I act aggressive. Some people are violent because they can't get what they want, they have problems. There is not much that we (the nonviolent people) can do about it. We can try to talk to them and show them that violence doesn't help them and doesn't make things better.

I don't think that tougher police tactics or stronger laws can change anything. Tougher police tactics would probably make it worse; people would see it as a provocation. Especially "jung" [German for

"young"] people. It would be more interesting for them, like everything forbidden. They want to prove themselves, show their friends how "tough" they really are. Police can't do much about violence. Actually, some cops are really aggressive. The police should be someone to look up to. So they should decrease their violence.

There is something that the government could do. It should decrease the factors which lead to violence, which are — for example — economic problems, joblessness, and poverty. Of course, the government tries to solve economic problems, and it's not easy, but they shouldn't tell the media everything about it. Television and the newspapers always make things worse than they are. So people read in the newspaper that there is a big economic problem and they worry about it even if it is not such a big problem anymore (like the Great Depression). And, of course, the government tries to give everyone a job. But if they can't give everyone a job, they should at least do more for the people who are jobless. I know, the government can't solve every person's problem, but it could at least try to take the major problems away.

◆
What I want to say is that socialism also had good sides and the government in Germany and America or any other country should try to offer more things for children. Show them that their country cares about them.
◆

Another problem is the drug related violence. People steal and beat up people to get some money for drugs. They try everything to get "high" again. That is pretty sad and it is a problem all over the world. The people who do things like that are not gangsters. They are addicted and they need our help, not punishment. There should be more places where people like that can go and get help. There shouldn't be a "war on drugs." There should be harder punishment on people who sell the drugs, not the people who use them.

I also think it is a good idea to legalize pot. It is not a "hard" drug and it is "better" for your body than alcohol. It would help a lot if people could buy pot in a normal store. They wouldn't meet people who sell the pot and "hard" drugs like heroin and cocaine, too. People who want to get stoned from pot would have a place to go and

smoke. In Holland, smoking pot is legal and they have shops called "coffee shops" where people can buy the pot and also smoke it there. I believe legalizing pot would decrease the number of people doing drugs, and so decrease the violence to get money for drugs. It worked in Holland. There are fewer people smoking pot and a lower percentage dying from "hard" drugs than in Germany or America.

Another thing the government could do is create better opportunities for children. In many families both parents are working and the child(ren) is/are alone at home. They are bored, so they watch TV all day. They see really violent movies, and they start to believe that the movie is real. Then they try to be like people in the movies. Some kids join street gangs and the gang becomes their family. Most of the kids in gangs are just looking for someone to talk to. And then again in the group they have to prove themselves. They beat up people and steal, just to be cool.

In Germany, when it was separated, the kids had clubs where they could go. They had groups they could join, not street gangs. They had something to do. Now

Germany is one (again) and all the activities are gone. Their parents are jobless. Many kids join the skinheads. It is kind of a street gang (very violent and against foreigners). But most of the kids don't care. They are not really against foreigners, they just want to be part of the group, they want to do something. What I want to say is that socialism also had good sides and the government in Germany and America or any other country should try to offer more things for children. Show them that their country cares about them.

Schools should talk about violence. Teachers should have discussions about it in class. Then maybe some violent kids would start to realize that what they are doing is not right. Everyone can do something. It's important to do something. It's important to talk with people, let them know how you

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GRANTS

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group is working with prisoners at a medium security prison to develop a chapter of FOR there.

The chapter's annual Althouse Peace Essay Competition is open to 9-12th grade students at Nauset Regional High School. It was developed as a memorial to Clarence Althouse, a peace and justice activist, environmentalist, and founding member of the chapter. Last year the subject of the contest was the Quincentennial and 74 students participated. This year the subject was violence in our society. Students were asked to explore the reasons for increased violence in our homes, schools, streets, and internationally, and to suggest ways that violence can be reduced. Eighty-five entries were received and prizes were awarded to the winners at ceremonies at the end of the school year. One of the winning essays is reprinted in this issue, and others were printed in Cape Cod newspapers. A RESIST grant funded the essay project.

Violence

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think and feel about things they do. If you see other people, for example, get beaten up, say something! Don't just ignore it. Let the violent people know that what they are doing isn't right and you don't like it.

That is all you can do, that and hope. Like Martin Luther King said:

One day—

Children from Alabama will ask:
What is racial segregation?

Children from Hiroshima will ask:
What is the atomic bomb?

Children at school will ask:
What is war?

You will answer them.
You will tell them:

These words are not used anymore,
Like stage-coaches, galleys and slavery.
Words no longer meaningful.

That is why they have been
removed from dictionaries.

Fabian Voges spent a year as a student at Nauset High School on Cape Cod, and recently returned to his hometown of Hamburg, Germany.

Appalachian Peace and Justice Network

18 North College Street
Athens, OH 45701

The Appalachian Peace and Justice Network (APJN) is a grassroots organization seeking to identify, link, educate, activate, and nurture groups and individuals in Appalachian Ohio and West Virginia concerned about peace and justice issues. Over the years, APJN has developed a number of programs, including a large lending library, two smaller travelling libraries, the Appalachian Peace Prize for area youth, a quarterly newsletter, conflict management and peer mediation training, and workshops and speakers.

Among APJN's goals are efforts to teach and advocate non-violence by providing curricula, workshops, seminars, and other resources for schools, churches, and families. APJN also provides models of alternatives to military contracting for businesses

and communities, and works to reduce the effects of isolation and loneliness on peace and justice activists in rural areas. The current focus of APJN is on anti-racism work, and involves the development of the Coalition to Overcome Racism in Athens, Ohio. The Network is working with churches to develop proactive strategies to address racism in their communities, including organizing peacekeeper training for groups and individuals that want to provide an opposing presence at KKK rallies in the area. In April, 1993, for example, twenty Athens-area persons acted as "peacekeepers" when about 1,000 anti-Klan demonstrators attended a rally of seven KKK members from Kentucky in Coshocton, Ohio. During the rally, the peacekeepers dispersed through the crowd, talking to people and working to minimize anger and violence at the rally.

RESIST's grant was to print and distribute new publicity materials and for the APJN newsletter. ◇

We Thought You Might be Interested...

Conversations on Violence

Conversations on Violence is a new video from the War Resisters League examining the National Security State apparatus and its many agents, and how they act to maintain the system through force. Specifically, it focuses on the FBI's COINTELPRO operation and its victims (political prisoners, prisoners of war) and the state militia's role in violently repressing people of color in the U.S. The video is the work of WRL staffperson Yaa Asantewa Nokware and includes interviews with WBAI Radio Program Director Samori Marksman, Japanese Internment expert Yuri Kichiyama, Puerto Rican Independence Activist Anna Lopez, several youth organizations, the Native American Education Program, and others. 30 minutes, VHS, \$20.00. For info, WRL, 339 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012.

Pacifism in Time of War

The War Resisters League has also recently released a number of important articles concerning Somalia and Yugoslavia, and an essay by David McReynolds, "Pacifism in Time of War," which argues against intervention and for an unarmed international peacekeeping force independent of the United Nations. McReynolds suggests that some form of this force is evolving in groups such as the World Peace Brigades, and Peace Brigades International. Also available from WRL are "Killing and Peacekeeping Don't Mix! The Cycle of Violence in Somalia Must End," "War at the Crossroads: An Historical Guide Through the Balkan Labyrinth," "War and Peace in the Balkans: A Resource Guide on Ex-Yugoslavia," and more. For info, (212) 228-0450, or fax (212) 228-6193.

GRANTS

In each issue of the newsletter we highlight a few recent grants made to groups around the country. In this issue we highlight grants to peacemaking and anti-violence projects. The information in these brief reports is provided by the groups themselves. For further information, please write to them at the addresses included here.

Women Against Violence P.O. Box 2731, Norfolk, VA 23501

Women Against Violence (WAV) was organized following the death of a 15 year old boy (James "Peter" Clements) in October, 1990. He was wounded in a "drive-by-shooting" just blocks from his home in Portsmouth, Virginia. After a series of community meetings, WAV announced its formation at a press conference which was followed by a Community Speak Out Against the Violence. Since then the group, comprised largely of working class African American women, has worked non-stop to stop the violence. Members have spoken at a local correctional facility, at inner city churches, and for civic groups. WAV developed a resolution calling for a Stop the Violence/Save Our Youth Sunday. Over 5,000 brochures with the group's proclamation against violence were distributed and read at churches throughout the area on the designated day in 1992. Since then, two more Save Our Youth Sunday campaigns have helped to get local churches and businesses involved in WAV's work.

In the fall/winter of 1993, WAV sponsored a Take the Violence Out of Christmas

program to encourage families to avoid purchasing violent and sexist music, videos, and toys.

WAV is being recognized as a pioneer grassroots organization in bringing the question of youth violence, and the responsibility of saving the community's children to public consciousness. Many of the group's members are single heads of households, whose children are faced with the threat of neighborhood youth violence. The goals of the group include developing organizing and personal management skills among members; serving as advocates for children; and challenging the educational, social, and recreational institutions which fail to meet the needs of the children.

WAV believes that long before young Black children fall victim to street violence and illegal activities, they are victims of poverty, low self-esteem, cultural and historical deprivation, and hopelessness. Convinced that they can't make it in our racist and capitalist system, they abandon the pursuit of an education. In order to guide children away from the violent and drug infested culture, parents and other adults must intervene and develop programs that foster self-worth, and social, cultural, and political responsibility. WAV's current project along these lines is its Rites of Passage Program, which tries to capture kids' interest, develop a sense of self-pride, and utilize peer pressure to reinforce anti-drug and anti-violence messages among young people.

The program is conducted by adult mentors and meets weekly. It includes rap sessions, guest presenters, and cultural workshops designed to expose program

participants to the importance of knowing history/culture; respecting the extended family, the elderly, and the community; community organizing; giving back to the community; and solving conflicts non-violently. Young people who successfully complete the program are involved in at least one volunteer community project working with elders, at a homeless shelter, or with a tenant's council. A key component includes a "retreat" in a natural area not far from the city, but which most of the youth involved have never been to. A RESIST grant supported the Rites of Passage Program.

Fellowship of Reconciliation/ Cape Cod Chapter

Box 591, Harwich, MA 02645

The Cape Cod Fellowship of Reconciliation was formed in 1980 as a response to nuclear weapons proliferation. The group has continued to focus on arms production and testing, but also addresses peace, justice, and human dignity concerns at all levels of society, both in the U.S. and internationally.

In recent years, Cape Cod FOR has continued to press for justice in Central America, worked to lift the embargoes against Cuba and Iraq, pressured for action for justice in Burma and East Timor, and for resolutions to the conflicts in Haiti, Panama, and the Middle East. In addition, the chapter has helped to pass resolutions against hate crimes in several Cape Cod towns, and has placed a question on the ballot dealing with the evacuation plan for the Pilgrim nuclear power plant.

The chapter publishes a monthly newspaper which suggests action projects such as letters-to-the-editor, boycott information and other organizing activities. One of the group's goals is to encourage young people to think critically about the world, and to develop an interest in non-violent solutions to the problems they identify. In addition the chapter focuses on preventing the reenactment of the death penalty in Massachusetts. FOR believes "the death penalty is morally unacceptable and is discriminatory on the basis of color and economic condition. Nor does it serve as a deterrent. We feel there is a moral imperative to rehabilitate human beings, rather than to kill them." The group has produced a video on the death penalty for local public access TV. In addition, the

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Join the Resist Pledge Program

We'd like you to consider becoming a Resist Pledge. Pledges account for over 25% of our income. By becoming a pledge, you help guarantee Resist a fixed and dependable source of income on which we can build our grant making program. In return, we will send you a monthly pledge letter and reminder, along with your newsletter. We will keep you up-to-date on the groups we have funded, and the other work being done at Resist. So take the plunge and become a Resist Pledge! We count on you, and the groups we fund count on us.

☐ **Yes! I would like to become a Resist Pledge. I'd like to pledge \$_____ / _____ (monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, 2x a year, yearly).**

☐ **Enclosed is my pledge contribution of \$_____.**

☐ **I can't join the pledge program just now, but here's a contribution to support your work. \$_____**

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Address _____

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